

## A F F E C T A T I O N .

BY MRS. CAROLINE H. BUTLER.

"From my soul  
I leathe all affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn,  
Object of my implacable disgust!"—COWPER.

"What can be the matter with Alice Welford?" said Bessie Waldo, as she joined a group of young girls. "I never saw any being more changed. Why, I have been absent nearly a year, and when I thought to receive the welcome of an old friend and companion, I was met with such coldness, such heartlessness of manner, that I declare, (silly girl that I am!) it forced the tears into my eyes. Can I have offended her?"

"Oh no; don't think it for a moment," replied her friend, laughing. "But the truth is, Bessie, Alice *has* changed. You must know she has but lately returned from a winter in the city, and in lieu of our favourite Alice, the unsophisticated village girl, has brought us back only the fine affected city lady."

"Is it so! Well, I wish the *fine lady* back again, amid the purlieus of fashionable folly; for I am sure she is perfectly ridiculous *here*—besides, no well-bred city lady but would despise as much as we do such airs and affected graces."

"You are right. Alice certainly shows great want of sense by her present absurd behaviour. Ah me! I fear she is utterly spoiled."

"For my part, I do not consider her either 'spoiled' or '*ridiculous*,'" interrupted Matilda Grant, who had not before spoken. "I think her more lovely than ever."

"I am glad you do, Matilda," replied Bessie. "But look, is not that Alice? Yes, I am sure it is; but how different from the light springing step with which she used to meet us!"

At this moment Alice Welford approached, and was about to pass the party of young girls with merely a most graceful courtesy and bow, when Bessie Waldo, laying her hand on her arm, cried—

"Do stop a moment, dear Alice; it is so long since we have met. Come, join us in a walk to one of our old favourite haunts."

"I thank you extremely, Miss Waldo," replied Alice, in a soft, lisping voice—"extremely; but you must excuse me. A long walk would really agitate my nerves too sensibly; and the sunbeams are horribly excruciating."

Then gracefully bowing, and drawing her green veil with a slight shudder over her face, Alice passed on.

The sylvan village of Fairdale, with its neat white cottages peeping forth from clustering roses and honey-suckles, its pretty church embowered in a grove of willows, and its nicely gravelled walks

shaded by lofty elms, was perhaps one of the sweetest spots where a lover of nature might pause on his journey through life, and there, far from the turmoil of the busy world, pass his days in peaceful seclusion and happiness.

It seems therefore almost profanation to speak of *money* in connection with so blissful a retreat; but *everywhere*, from the time when "*Adam delved and Eve spun*," the love of *riches* will creep amid the most lovely scenes, even as sin within the holy precincts of paradise.

Mr. Welford (the father of Alice) was the most wealthy man in Fairdale. He had held a lucky ticket in the lottery of life, and having constantly borne in mind the thrifty maxim, "*a penny saved is a penny gained*," could now count his thousands and tens of thousands. He was also an upright, honest man—never known to grind the poor, or distress the widow and fatherless; while on the other hand, it might perhaps be said, neither was he ever known to expend aught in charity, or helped to smooth the path of life for the forlorn and destitute.

Somewhat late in life, he had united himself to a lady of nearly his own age, and who perhaps might be said to excel even her husband in the careful hoarding of pounds, shillings and pence. She was very ambitious—fond of dress, and of making a display, for which indulgences light dinners and an empty larder were often made to bring up all arrears. As Alice, their only child, grew up, the purse of the proud and happy father was never denied; for it was the aim and ambition of both parents that their daughter should not only be the best educated girl in the village, but that her *dress* should always excel in richness those of her young companions. It was almost a miracle that Alice should have grown up to womanhood unspoiled by such lavish indulgence.

She was, indeed, a lovely girl. Her complexion was radiant with health and happiness, and if by some the rose might be thought too predominant, her beautifully formed neck and hands were as white as falling snow flakes. Her eyes were large, of a soft and lustrous black, shaded by the most beautiful eye-lashes, and arched with the bow of Love. Her nose was *petite* and perfect, and her lips like the inner leaf of the rose. She was of middling height, delicately proportioned, with a foot of fairy mould. The mind of the fair Alice was not, it is true, as richly gifted; still her talents

by no means below mediocrity, while her temper and disposition were naturally amiable.

In infancy and in childhood she was so bright and joyous, so winning in her artless endearments, that every eye fell on her with delight; and as that period advanced when, bidding a joyful farewell to all school discipline, she tripped lightly forth to commence the journey of life,—to her imagination a beautiful garden, where the hand of pleasure was ever strewing thornless roses, gemmed with the bright dew of happiness,—there was one general tribute of admiration. Without a feeling of envy, her young companions stepped aside to yield place to the brilliant queen of their little coterie—the brightest flower of as beautiful a garland as ever came fresh and glowing from the hands of nature; for in Fairdale, one would think the fairies, as in olden time, had touched each blushing maiden with their wand, such wealth was there of beauty.

Frederick and Bessie Waldo were the children of a wealthy landed proprietor in the neighbourhood of Fairdale, between whom and the parents of Alice there had always existed the warmest friendship—a bond which seemed to unite even more closely the hearts of their children. In childhood they were inseparable, and until Frederick left for college, scarcely a day passed that the three friends did not meet. Frederick was a young man of promising talents; enthusiastic in his attachments, generous and noble in his feelings. He would not, it is true, have been considered the *beau ideal* of manly beauty, yet there was a charm in his frank ingenuous countenance, which drew all hearts in his favour.

Although some years older than Alice, Frederick deemed it no reason why he should not *continue* to love the beautiful girl; as to *falling in love*, he never did;—he had adored her with his whole heart and soul from the time she first lisped his name. Nor was he by any means the only one fascinated and made captive by her charms. There was not a youth in the village but felt suicidal if she but smiled upon another; and many were the lines, now lost to fame, penned by some “mute inglorious Milton,” which were inspired by her beauty.

At each vacation, how gladly did Frederick hasten to Fairdale, sure of always meeting a joyful welcome from Alice. He witnessed with delight the gradual development of her mind and person,—in his eye she was perfection. No one touched the piano with such skill; there was no voice so sweet. No pencil but that of Alice could have given that living glow to the landscape;—and her writing—ah! surely some *elfin sprite* must have guided her little hand!

Upon leaving college, Frederick commenced the study of medicine in Philadelphia. There, day after day, night after night, did the young student toil on in unceasing study, to make for himself a reputation and a name worthy his beloved Alice; for not until then he resolved would he offer either heart or hand to her acceptance.

But in the meanwhile, o’er the heaven of Alice

Welford’s beauty a cloud was rising—a mere speck at first, yet ever increasing, until it overshadowed her whole lovely person! It was at first difficult to tell *why* she was less pleasing—for less pleasing she certainly was. Her companions looked from one to the other, and silently wondered; for so well did they all love her, that each one strove to conceal her thoughts within her own bosom. About this time Alice was invited to pass a few months in the city, and upon her return *affectation* stood forth too palpable to be longer mistaken!

She was now suddenly distressed by fogs and moonlight! She took to sighs and sentiment, and in *that* vein her eyes were set, deep-rolling, tearful. Her voice was now so fine, “no sound could live ’twixt it and silence,” and if she smiled, (for *now* away with *laughter*;) it was constrained, sickly. A beautiful mouth too had Alice, and beautifully white were the little teeth within; yet somehow or other “*the pink portico with an ivory door*” was guarded by a strange fanciful porter! Her manners and conversation partook also of the same unnatural change.

Mrs. Welford, deceived and blinded by her maternal love, saw only the most graceful refinement in her daughter; while Mr. Welford, good man, although he was at first somewhat puzzled, and was heard once or twice to utter an impatient “*pish!*” at length concluded these new-fangled airs were all right, so settled himself contentedly down to his day-book and ledger.

Although many of her most intimate friends now shunned the society of Alice, there were some who not only *fancied* they admired, but who also strove to imitate her every word and motion. Among these Matilda Grant shone conspicuously; and nature having innocently placed a languishing blue eye in her little head of light flaxen ringlets, and given a gentle lisp to her tongue, the mantle of affectation fell not ungracefully around her white dimpled shoulders.

Could these young ladies but have seen themselves as others saw them, how little would their self love have been flattered; for nowhere does affectation appear more odious than when she comes with mincing step and languishing simper amid the homely scenes of country life.

“God made the country and man made the town,” are words which fell from the pen of the inspired Cowper. It is in the gay thoroughfare of the city, therefore, in the glitter of the ball-room, in the brilliant saloon, or amid the artificial allurements of fashionable life, that affectation may be tolerated, although she is everywhere to be despised. But let her shun the country—the very school of nature, where grace may be learned even from the tall grass as it meets the kiss of the summer wind, and where the little blue violet, and the spotless lily of the valley, teach lessons of modesty and purity. Music!—can the opera send forth sweeter notes than morn and eve meet your ear from yonder grove? Hark to the robin, and the merry bob-o’-link, or to the lark trilling her hymn of praise far up in the azure vault of heaven! The silvery rill,

to, as it leaps and dances over its pebbly bed, will teach you cheerfulness, and bright-eyed health and exercise transfer to your cheek the lovely tints of the rose.

Nearly a year of arduous study was passed by Frederick Waldo ere he again visited Fairdale; but now with love, hope and joy glowing at his heart, he once more pressed the green sward of his native village.

As soon as the affectionate greetings of kindred were interchanged, he flew to the residence of Mr. Welford, where he was received with the most cordial kindness. The natural feelings of Alice triumphed for a while over all affectation, and with a blush as of old, and a sparkling eye, she extended her hand to meet the warm pressure of her early friend. For that evening Alice was *herself*—or if perchance some few of her newly acquired *graces* shone forth, they were eclipsed in the eyes of her lover by her more artless manner, and he left her presence intoxicated with love and happiness.

But when the next morning Frederick saw Alice, she was languidly reclining upon a sofa, apparently too much absorbed in reading to notice his approach. With the prettiest little start in the world, therefore, she raised her head as his hand fell lightly upon her raven tresses, and exclaiming with great pathos—

"Oh, tell me, *have* you read it?" buried her face in her handkerchief.

"What is it, my dear Alice, that distresses you? Read what? What sudden calamity has befallen you?"

"Oh! no calamity to *myself*—but think of the sufferings of the poor wretched Sophie! Ah, is it not enough to rend the heart! But you must have read 'Sophie?'"

"I confess I have not," replied Frederick, smiling. "But come, I cannot allow *fictional* woes to prevent us from enjoying this fine morning. Bessie and I have planned a little excursion on horseback, (ever your delight, I remember,) and I have called to ask you to accompany us."

"Really, you are very kind, Mr. Waldo," replied Alice; "but nothing could tempt me to leave this charming book."

"Indeed!" answered Frederick, evidently piqued by her refusal; "I flattered myself the society of a long absent friend might be of more value to you. But come, Alice," (resuming all his wonted frankness of manner,) "do lay aside your book. Recollect for nearly a year I have been pent within the walls of a city, and now feel as if released from a galling bondage. I wish to enjoy every moment of nature and of *you*, my dear friend."

"Oh! pray take your ride—do, I beseech of you," she replied, laying her hand on his arm, and pushing him gently from her. "Do go;—but pray leave me to my delightfully absorbing Sophie!"

"Alice!"

"I believe I am very nervous this morning," she added, as she *felt* that look of wounded affection

fixed upon her;—then rising and slightly blushing, walked to the window.

"Since, then, you refuse me the happiness of your society, you will at least favour me with music—one song, Alice," said Frederick.

"How can you ask me to sing in the morning? It really is so *outré*, so *désagréable*, as the French say;—but since you wish it, I will play a favourite air of Matilda Grant's. Have you seen sweet Matilda?—the loveliest creature! Yet I must say, to attempt eliciting harmony at such an unseasonable hour, does not coincide with *my* taste."

"Then pray, Miss Welford, do not disturb yourself on my account," replied Frederick; and coldly bowing, he left the room.

As might be expected, there was no riding that day. Frederick felt deeply hurt by the conduct of Alice;—it was so strange, so unlike herself. For the whole day he remained moody and silent, but at length, with all the generosity of true love, he accused himself of being unjust to Alice. "It was selfish in me," thought he, "to expect her to leave a story in which she was so much interested merely for a ride which she can enjoy any day;—and as to music, why, truly it does seem out of place in the *morning*. I wonder how I *could* be so absurd as to feel so much offended." And thus laying "the flattering unction to his soul," he was soon by the side of Alice.

"It is *evening*, Alice, the *hour* for music. You will now sing to me."

"Oh yes, with pleasure," she replied; and then seating herself with the most studied gracefulness at the piano, arranging her profusion of long ringlets, with many other pretty little airs, she turned in a languishing manner to Frederick, and inquired in a soft voice what song he would prefer. A favourite air from "La Somnambula" was named, with which Alice had often charmed his ear.

Running her fingers lightly over the keys, the really fine voice of Alice commenced "Still so gently o'er me stealing." Poor Frederick looked and listened with strangely commingled feelings of pleasure and disgust. It was surely Alice!—it was her bird-like voice which fell on his ear!—yet so distorted, perverted by theatrical tone and manner, that he could hardly trust his senses.

"Oh sweet, bewitching—heavenly!" cried Matilda Grant, clasping her hands, and rolling her pretty eyes in ecstasy.

Frederick merely bowed his thanks, and then named a simple Scotch air; but here, alas! the most beautiful song of Burns was "worse confounded" with *affected* simplicity—and after many vain attempts to elicit some chord which might vibrate to his heart as in other days, Frederick turned sorrowfully away, and soon after took leave—more unhappy than he had ever felt before, and perhaps *less in love!*

Frederick remained a week in Fairdale. He saw Miss Welford but seldom, yet each time they did meet, served only to disenchant him the more—and when he returned to Philadelphia to pursue

those studies which for *her* sake had been so sweet, life to the young student seemed disrobed of half its charms.

Room now for the elegant Julius Adolphus Bubble! Step aside, oh all ye village swains, ye homespun youths! Doff now your caps in humble submission, and come not "*betwixt the wind and his nobility*!"

Matilda Grant had a brother. This brother had a friend, and that friend was Julius Adolphus Bubble! He came from the far "sunny south" to inhale the cool breezes of a northern clime—to rusticate in the native village of his friend. Ah! favoured Fairdale, to receive beneath your rural shades this specimen exquisite—the inimitable Bubble! In the words of Carlyle, he may be best described.

"Elegant vacuum! serenely looking down upon all plenums and entities! The doom of fate was *—be thou a dandy!* Have thy eye-glasses, opera-glasses,—thy Long Acre cabs with white-breeched tiger!—thy yawning impassitives, pococurantisms—*—fix thyself in dandyhood undeliverable. It is thy doom!*"

And a doom which was met with wonderful resignation by the nature-befited Julius.

When first he met the soft blue eyes of Matilda, he swore she was "an angel!" When he encountered the bewitching languor of Alice Welford's dark rolling orbs, he laid his hand where his heart should have been, and vowed upon his honour she was "*dee-vine!*" In the words of the song, he might have said—

"How happy could I be with *either*,  
If t'other charmer were away."

Nor were these young ladies by any means insensible to the attractions of the elegant southerner. He was "bewitching," "ravishing,"—"what eyes!" "what whiskers!" and ah!—yes—"what a superb moustache!"

As Matilda said, it was "glorious as the first ruddy streak of Aurora's pencil, by which she signals to the night-curtaained world the approach of the sun-god of day!" (True, *the moustache was red!*) To which rhapsody, Bessie Waldo replied with a wicked laugh, that had he lived in the days of Oberon and Puck, he would have needed the disguise of *no other ass's head* than his own, and like poor translated Bottom, he was already "*marvellously hairy about the face.*"

Time flew all too swift for the trio. On he sped, (heartless old fellow!) careless that he was fast bringing round the *fat* of separation.

There was riding, and boating, and *pic-nic-ing* in Fairdale. There was music by moonlight, and soft sighs, and soul-subduing looks "called up," outdoing even Mrs. Pentweazle. But at length "the robin and the wren had flown," and the autumn breeze blew chilly around the delicate form of Bubble, whistling a mournful requiem to pleasure through those *magnifique* whiskers!—and so

with the summer birds the elegant Julius took wing—*sic transit gloria mundi!*—leaving behind him not only two engaged *hearts*, but, alas, two engaged *hands!*

This modern Lothario had sworn love and constancy to both fair friends. He had *wept* at the feet of Alice until she whispered of hope; and then, as he received her blushing assent to be his, he won from her the promise that not even her bosom friend, Matilda, should be allowed to share her happiness. For a while, strict *secrecy* must be observed;—it was very important for his *saf. ty* that this engagement should not be known at the South—hinted of a "rich heiress" pining in green and yellow melancholy for the love of *him*—"jealousy"—"midnight dagger," &c., until Alice, turning pale as if she already saw the form of her lover laid prostrate by the assassin, gave the promise he required.

He then fell upon his knees before Matilda—swore by all the stars he loved but her alone—and that if she proved unkind—

"From a window his body should dangle!  
Or a bullet should *whiz* through his brain!!  
Or the fishes his carcass should mangle!!!"

But Matilda had no wish to be unkind to her *desperate* lover. She bent gently over him, and softly murmured forth her love. Then rising to his feet, Bubble beat his breast and his brow, calling himself a wretch to have thus obtained her love, when there were *reasons*—*weighty* reasons—that she must be his affianced bride in *secrecy*—*secrecy!* Not even Alice must know that Cupid held their hearts transfixed, waiting to shake them off upon the altar of hymen!

And thus these two imprudent, deluded girls, fell readily into the snare prepared by the artful Bubble.

During the winter, Frederick Waldo came again to Fairdale. It is needless to say what were the motives which incited him away from his arduous studies and brought him *once more* into the presence of Miss Welford.

Since his return to Philadelphia he had been perfectly wretched. He had loved Alice too deeply to tear her image from his heart without much mental suffering, and now that "distance lent enchantment," he began again to think of her as she *had been*—not as she *was*. He blamed himself severely for the unkind thoughts he had indulged toward her. He *only* was in the wrong. He had confined himself so closely to his books, shunning all society, that he had become a perfect misanthrope! Alice was young—she was beautiful and rich! Doubtless she was the same as other young girls, flattered and indulged as she had been, only a thousand times more beautiful! Why had he been so fastidious? Thus the *lover strove* to reason, while at the same time flitting before his mental vision came the *Alice* he had known in early life, seeming to reproach him for even palliating the follies of the *affected Miss Welford*.

To Fairdale then came Frederick once more—determined to look upon Alice with a less jaundiced eye. But, alas! he was doomed to have his fond flattering hopes dispelled, and his worse fears more than realized. The “last link was broken,” and forever. His love changed to pity and contempt; and he now almost wondered how it was possible that Alice could ever have been the object of his love.

Before leaving Fairdale, Frederick addressed her the following letter—

“Pardon me, my dear Miss Welford, if I take the privilege of an old friend to address you; and should the perusal of these lines intrude upon a portion of your time, may the interest I feel for you plead my excuse. They come from one who once adored you—yes, fondly, truly loved you; and although those bright gems of feeling which lit up the dark passages of my life are now and forever extinguished, still the friendship, the sincere regard I must ever feel for you, prompts me to the fulfilment of what I consider my duty, although I am aware by so doing I may draw upon myself your lasting displeasure.

“There was a time, my dear friend, when your charms of manner and winning artlessness were not surpassed even by your unparalleled beauty; and pardon me, Alice, if I add, that thereon was based your greatest attraction!—for although the eye may still sparkle, the cheek outvie the rose in beauty, the form equal in gracefulness the Medician Venus, and the voice still pour forth sounds sweet as the heaven-drawn notes of the Æolian harp, yet if over all these charms *affectation* casts her transforming influence, *where is their power to delight?* Alas! when *ingenuousness and simplicity* withdrew their support, *that power was lost!*

“Alice, in the eyes of all sensible people, you have lost your greatest charms!

“Affectation, like the poisonous *Upas*, defiles all it touches. From her approach, nature recoils, and simplicity shrinks affrighted! At first, affectation is content to wind her fanciful wreaths around the *exterior* of her victim; but the *poison* therein concealed soon penetrates the inner temple of the heart. The most sacred affections are violated and made to attest her baneful influence. Truth and love—even religion herself—but issue thence in the garb of mockery!

“This is bold and harsh language, my dear Alice, (for so in friendship let me ever call you,) but yet you must acknowledge its truth.

“Alice, renounce at once and forever the syren who now holds you in such withering bondage. Act from the natural impulses of your own pure heart. Cast aside the flimsy veil of affectation, and stand forth in your own loveliness! You may yet realize all that beauty of *mind* and person of which but a short time since you gave the promise.

“Others, my dear Miss Welford, may not have the courage to speak to you in the language of truth; yet, whatever you may now think, the time

will come when you will acknowledge to your heart that you never possessed a more sincere friend than

FREDERICK WALDO.”

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of Miss Welford as she finished this letter. Anger, shame, mortification and wounded *self-love* stirred her heart by turns, while conscience told her every word traced therein by the hand of one whom her own folly had driven from her, were those of truth—the language of a heart still anxious for her good; that it came more in sorrow than in anger, breathing sentiments of compassion and kindness, rather than of the scorn and contempt she *felt* she merited. Once more Alice read the letter; then crushing it in her hand, she thrust it into the flames. As it caught the blaze she breathed more *freely*, for it seemed as if she was destroying a hated witness of her folly; and when all that remained was a black shrivelled mass, she tossed her head proudly as if in defiance, exclaiming, with flushed cheek and angry brow—

“Really, how very presuming!—how very impertinent in Frederick Waldo! Lost my *charms*, indeed! How different is Julius Adolphus;—he says nothing can be more *richeché* than my conversation; nothing more *naïve* than my manner. Really, Mr. Waldo is too absurd!”

Then casting an admiring look first in the glass, then upon a brilliant which sparkled on her finger, (the gift of Bubble,) she sank into a blissful meditation.

There came at length a letter to Fairdale, autographic of the elegant Bubble! It was addressed to Mr. Welford, making known his love for his fair daughter. There came also another letter—this was for Alice. It was a *pattern* love-letter, in which, after an ocean of tears were passed over by the fluttering Alice, a volcano of sighs happily surmounted, she came to the word “*beware.*” “*Beware of Miss Grant!*” wrote Julius Adolphus. The sentence which followed was couched with the dark pen of mystery; but plain, palpable evidence twinkled forth that Matilda had sought *his* love!—sought to entrap a heart beating love’s own *rub-a-dub* only for his adored, adorable Alice!

The engagement of Miss Welford to the rich southerner was forthwith announced by the delighted parents.

Oh! how rustled the silk dress of Mrs. Welford as she passed in and out the houses of Fairdale, receiving the *forced* congratulations (as she imagined) of the envious mothers of grown up, unmarried, unspoken for daughters! Stately as a ship she sailed over the village green, freighted with immeasurable pride and exultation. And Mr. Welford, on that day which made known the high destiny auspicious fate had prepared for his daughter, in a fit of mental abstraction, withdrew his hand from the pocket of his waistcoat, and actually placed a shilling in the hand of a poor woman!

But Matilda Grant? Alas! for some hours Ma-

tilda went off in strong hysterics at the perfidy of her lover. Then flying to Alice, she upbraided her in the most *natural* manner for her deceitfulness—for basely, treacherously weaning from her a heart and hand which she vowed were plighted to her, and her alone! But Alice, bearing in mind the letter of Bubble, listened with the most provoking, unbelieving smile, to all these accusations; and, as might be expected, the bosom friends parted implacable enemies.

Matilda scrupled not to make known to her parents the faithlessness of her quondam lover; and now it was Mrs. Grant's turn to perambulate the village, railing at the "*designing* Welfords," the "*artful* Alice," and pitying and despising the "*poor duped friend*" of her son. What a commotion in Fairdale! What a tempest between the belligerent houses of "*Montague and Capulet*!"

The conduct of Mr. Julius Bubble must be explained. He had been smitten with *both* of these village beauties, and hesitated "*which of the two to choose*." Like a prudent man, he resolved his decision should not be made in haste to be repented of at leisure. It was politic, therefore, to attach both strings fast to his bow—and thus his *double* engagement. But when he returned to R—, he found the house of "*Bubble, Froth & Bubble*," of which he was the junior partner, had *burst*. His decision was then unhesitatingly made. The delicate hand of Matilda, he was aware, would come to him simply encased in a *white kid glove*, while that of Alice gleamed on his money-desiring vision like a pearl *perdue* amid a rich heap of *golden guineas*!

The month of July was fixed upon in which the happy lovers were to be made one. And now the "*note of preparation*" sounded far and near. Mantuamakers and milliners were kept busy from morn till night. The stage came in loaded with packages, destined to be cut, clipped, united, and to receive a "*local habitation and a name*" under the creative powers of the handmaids of fashion. The purse of Mr. Welford seemed inexhaustible. Nothing was spared to render the *trousseau* of the fair bride worthy her illustrious destiny.

But the Grants tossed their heads in high disdain, and vowed they neither *would* or *could* stay in the place to witness such disgraceful proceedings;—so they packed up their clothes and were off to Saratoga, seeking probably a *Lethe* in their waters!

"On Thursday, then, he will be here!" cried Alice, as she placed a highly perfumed letter upon her dressing-table. Then taking a magnificent sprig of pearls, she placed it in the tresses of her dark hair, and stood before the mirror contemplating with much satisfaction its effect.

Observe now how she *smiles*, bows; then cour-

tesys as if she was receiving the homage of some prince—again—with all the *hauteur* to be observed to the *canaille*; while the beautiful image in the mirror reflects back to her vain mind the *comme il faut* air with which all must be *performed* to produce the *sensation* she desires.

Tired at length of attitudinizing, Alice languidly took up a newspaper, and in sympathetic vein cast her eyes first upon the records of hymen.

A shrill scream aroused Mrs. Welford, who was in an adjoining room. She rushed in, and found Alice pale, nearly fainting, with the paper clasped tightly in her trembling hand.

"Oh, mother, mother, read this!" she faltered forth.

Scarcely less agitated than her daughter, Mrs. Welford took the paper and read as follows—

"Married, in New York, by the Rev. ———, Julius Adolphus Bubble, Esq., of R——, Virginia, to Miss Matilda Grant, daughter of T. Grant, Esq., of Fairdale."

It seems the enraged Grants resolved that the perfidious bridegroom elect should not slip like an *empty bubble* thus easily through their fingers! They fancied him to be *rich*, and *therefore* they determined he should be the husband of their not unwilling daughter. Seeing his name in a list of arrivals at New York, they proceeded without delay from Saratoga to that city, and by dint of threats soon compelled the frightened Bubble to accede to their demands.

Alas for Bubble! Wheresoever he turned his eyes, he saw "*breach of promise*" written in letters of flame, and being unable to meet "*damages*," the debtor's prison rose dark and gloomy in perspective. And thus Matilda Grant became Mrs. Bubble!—*each* caught in the meshes of the net their own artifice had contrived.

Years have since passed, and Alice is still unmarried. Her beauty is on the wane, and her faults have lost even their power to excite compassion. She will probably fall the prey of some fortune-hunter.

Frederick Waldo is now the husband of a young girl, as charming, as *unaffected* as was *once* the object of his early love.

May the history of Alice Welford prove a warning to those young girls, who in possession of youth and beauty, still strive by artificial manners to augment their charms; while, to those whom nature may not have so richly gifted, may it teach that natural simplicity, ingenuousness of speech, and gentleness of manner, prompted by the warm feelings of the heart, are charms which not even a brighter eye, or a more rosy cheek can enhance, or the want thereof *diminish*.

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN OLD SOFA.

BY HELEN MAITLAND.

I FIRST saw the light—it matters not where—about the year 1780. As the consciousness of existence dawned upon me, I heard the commendations bestowed upon my appearance, and with the emotions of vanity thus coeval with my birth, began to pride myself not a little on the brilliancy of my exterior. Nay, as I looked on my robe of crimson and gold, and then about me, I could not suppress a feeling of contempt for my humble neighbour in mohair, who seemed to shrink into insignificance by my side. I could not help observing that the customers of my master invariably looked first at *me*; thus yielding as I thought an involuntary and well merited tribute to my superior excellence. I heard many a fair dame lament her inability to purchase so splendid an ornament to her drawing-room; yet even these acknowledgments of my magnificence sometimes occasioned me chagrin. I had the mortification to see my humble neighbour in mohair and several others of like pattern carried off in triumph, while I remained admired, but unappropriated; and destined, I began to fear, to find my beauties tarnished by time without having administered to the pride even of one individual. I was one day absorbed in these melancholy reflections, and did not observe an unusual bustle around me, till I heard my master very volubly descanting upon my merits to a young and beautiful woman, who was evidently regarding me with much complacency. After a little discussion, she put some bright pieces into my master's hand, and said in a sweet but authoritative voice—"Send it home, to — street, No. 37." Who can paint my delight at the prospect of being emancipated from these dull rooms, and seeing the gay world! The manner of transportation, it is true, was barbarous enough;—I was placed in a rough wagon, and jolted over the pave to the jeopardy of my very life, before being finally set down before my *new* abode. Shaken as I was, curiosity kept me from despair. I longed to see the place I should occupy, and to know what treatment I should receive. My outer covering being at length removed, I was respectfully conducted up stairs into a spacious and superb room, where to my astonishment I saw a number of companions in dresses quite as gorgeous as my own, and indeed precisely like it—all glittering in the blaze of numerous wax lights in various parts of the room. I recognized my fair mistress. She was standing near the place which was henceforth to be mine; and it gave me pleasure to observe that it was a place of distinction. I must here confess to a little spirit of jealousy, (which I hardly acknowledged to myself,) lest some

rival might share the homage I would willingly have monopolized. In those days, furniture was too solid and stately for the present eccentric fashion of locomotion about a room, so that, as I remarked, the place assigned me became permanently mine. Near the lady stood a gentleman, whom I soon discovered to be her husband;—a man of grave and dignified aspect, but with something of a sarcastic expression about his mouth. In answer to the admiring looks of his wife, he said—

"So this is your new purchase?"

"Yes; and it is so pretty and so comfortable;—only try it!"

With that she sank down, reclining on one of my arms, and pointed to the other unoccupied seat, smilingly adding, as she gathered her full robes around her—"My dress will afford you no more room." For then

"The hoop's enchanting round  
Gave even the toe the power to wound."

My master took the seat with an indifferent air; at which, and his failing to appreciate my beauty, I felt not a little indignant—hardly suffering my anger to be soothed by his admission that the sofa was in truth more comfortable than he imagined, (my fine looks went for nothing). "I dare say," he added, "by the time the gloss is fairly off, I shall like it quite as well as the one you banished on account of its ungenteel appearance." I was of a reflective turn, and this instance of my mistress's caprice towards an old and faithful servant, gave me some uneasiness. Such may one day be my fate, thought I,—and self-love received a wound. Nevertheless, I still wore my first gloss, and the gay groups that soon filled the rooms seemed to admire me, and the sad feeling was lost in gratified vanity. The next day, however, I was enveloped in a dark overdress, which was never taken off unless there were others besides the family to admire my beauty. Every evening my mistress occupied the seat she had at first taken, and often beguiled my master to sit beside her, when he read aloud to her, or gave her instruction in the modern languages, with which he seemed to be perfectly acquainted. He was much older than his wife, and she regarded him with as much reverence as love. I began to lose even my admiration of self in contemplating their quiet happiness.

More than a year passed in this way, when I one evening missed my fair mistress from her accustomed seat. My master came as usual, but walked restlessly to and fro, as if devoured by anxiety. At length he rushed out of the room, and I saw

him no more for several days. Then the drawing-room was closed, and I and my companions remained in utter darkness for several weeks. I felt unhappy, but it was less on my own account than that of my mistress, to whom I had become truly attached. One morning the windows were all thrown open in haste, our coverings taken off, and we received such a dusting from the housemaid, that I am sure the strength of my frame alone enabled me to survive it. A few hours passed, when I heard footsteps and voices approaching; and my mistress, leaning on her husband's arm, walked slowly to her wonted seat. She was pale and thin; so very thin, I hardly felt her weight; and my master, seating himself beside her, drew her towards him and kissed her white cheek tenderly. Soon afterwards, others came in; and among the last, a gentleman of dignified appearance, dressed in flowing robes. Then came a servant bearing a rich silver bowl filled with water, and last of all a fat old woman with a bundle of something white in her arms. The grave gentleman began to read from a book, and taking the white burden in his arms, sprinkled it with some of the water, which action produced a faint sound, like a suppressed cry. My mistress seemed agitated; the burden was brought and placed on her lap, and caressed fondly by her and my master. From that day the mother occupied her accustomed place continually, accompanied by her little son. Years rolled on, and a succession of bright little forms were in turn nursed upon my lap, and I looked on them with love unutterable. I thought no longer exclusively of myself.

A change came upon this happy family. The father, from day to day, was placed upon me, supported by pillows; and he seemed to suffer much. I heard the consultation of physicians, and the expressed desire of the invalid to travel in search of health to foreign lands. The family departed, and it was long, very long, before they returned. When they did return, the merry children who had so often clambered up my sides, were grown to noble looking men; and there were besides two bright-eyed girls, light and graceful as fairies. No longer young and vain, I expected not to hear exclamations of rapture or admiration; but I was not prepared for the speech which followed the first laughing glance of one of them at me.

"Gracious, mamma! do have all this antediluvian furniture taken away. That old sofa must be the exact model of the one Noah took into the ark!"

"You must first prove, Melanie," said her graver sister Nannette, "that Noah was luxurious enough to desire a sofa!"

"Spare me an argument, my matter-of-fact sister, upon the subject, and employ your energy much more worthily in assisting me to coax mamma to get rid of the present annoyance. But here comes papa, and he is always my champion."

The happy creature ran up caressingly to her father, who parted the bright ringlets on her brow and kissed her fair forehead. 'Twould be a hard

heart, indeed, he said, which could withstand the eloquence of his favourite.

"Now for the proof, papa. I have been urging the expediency of new-furnishing our drawing-room, and sending away all this old-fashioned trumpery. Mamma does not look propitious, and seems to have an unaccountable affection for that old *cynic* of a sofa!"

The low musical laugh that followed gave me a deeper pang than all the rest. My time at last was come; but I was better disciplined than formerly to bear reverses. Old age, I reflected, was not dishonourable; and I had been much flattered and admired in youth. I must bow meekly to the decrees of fate. My master's reply consoled me.

"I too, Melanie, have an affection for that old sofa. We will coax mamma to let us have it removed to my library, where she and I can often enjoy it together as we have done in days of yore; and you may furnish this room according to your giddy fancy."

The young lady and her mother expressing satisfaction at this arrangement, next day the chairs, &c., were sent out of the house, and I was removed into the library to occupy still a grave and dignified station. My master spent most of his time in this room, and my mistress often stole from the gay circles in the drawing-room to seat herself by his side, and join in his studies, or talk over the past. My young masters, too, were frequent guests, and received instruction from their father's lips as from an oracle. But one by one they married and left the paternal roof, till the old people were quite alone. They now scarcely left me for a day.

One evening, never by me to be forgotten, my master and mistress had been conversing long and pleasantly on some of the passages of their life, and the happiness they now enjoyed in their amiable children. My mistress retired to her chamber; my master remained absorbed in thought, when suddenly he put his hand to his head and fell forwards insensible. How I longed for a voice to proclaim his situation. No one came; and more than an hour passed while he lay without animation. About that time a sleepy servant, fancying he heard the bell, came into the room; and the alarm was speedily given. My master was placed on me, and means taken to restore sense and consciousness. These were successful; but a paralytic stroke had deprived the excellent old man of the use of his limbs, and after months of a miserable existence, I one morning received his last sigh.

For months I did not see my mistress; and when I did it was but a farewell look. She came to me and regarded me steadfastly for some time; and as she bent over the cushion on which my poor master's head had reposed, I felt the hot tears falling on my arm. She then slowly left the apartment, and I saw her no more.

Rude hands then seized me. I was placed in a cart and carried, with many other pieces of furniture, to a shop not unlike the one in which I first saw the light. In a few days I underwent an entire



metamorphosis, being stripped and scraped, and beaten and hammered till I thought my last hour had come. But this process was necessary to my renovation. I gradually emerged into a form somewhat resembling that of my youthful prime, though shorn forever of my gorgeous dress. My present garb was sober and demure as that of a quaker. I liked it, however, as befitting one who had seen much of the vanity of life, and was heartily tired of it all. I felt a sort of sad resignation as I was placed in the show-rooms of the establishment. Not long was I left in quiet. A lady and gentleman, whom I will call Mr. and Mrs. H—, saw me as they entered the shop, and declared I was the very thing they wanted for their country establishment. Thither I was soon conveyed. Mr. and Mrs. H— had been married some years, and were blessed with many children, who tormented me not a little by climbing and running over my clean dress, to say nothing of the thumps and kicks by which I was honoured in their imaginary drives. The eldest son, Henry, had long passed the age of childhood, and frequently reproved the younger ones for their rude assaults on my person. He was a noble youth, and the idol of his mother. For hours he would sit beside her, telling her of all his bright anticipations, of the time when he should be a man and the artificer of his own fortunes. I loved the mother and son whose hearts were so closely knit together, and mourned for them; for even my brief experience had taught me that continued happiness is not allotted to mortals. Time sped swiftly on. Henry was nineteen, and gave promise of being no common man when years had nurtured his intellect. One sultry afternoon in June, he came gaily into the room, and kissing his mother, bade her come to the door and see how well he managed his horse, a superb but wild animal lately purchased for him. The mother smilingly obeyed; and as the manly youth, graceful and beautiful as fearless, dashed his spurs into his horse and rode away, the throb of pride in that mother's heart might well be forgiven. A few hours later, and there was a fearful storm; and as the hoarse thunder rattled overhead, or rolled in the distance, and the lightning flashed at intervals, the anxious mother moved restlessly about, looking frequently towards the road her son was to return. There was a presentiment of evil at her heart. With a sigh, she came to the small table on which her Bible was laid, and taking that blessed book, tried to gather comfort and resignation to whatever might happen. She had been reading perhaps an hour; the storm was over, and the rain drops on the leaves were glittering in the rays of the setting sun. Closing her book, and walking slowly to the door, she opened it; when the first sight she saw was her son's horse quietly grazing on the lawn before the house! The saddle was crushed and torn, and the horse's sides covered with mire. She called, "Henry!" but no voice

answered. Mr. H— was instantly summoned, and with his domestics followed the fresh tracks of the horse in search of his rider. They had not far to go. On the edge of a small stream, at the foot of a steep and slippery bank, lay the unfortunate young man. Apparently his horse in excessive fright had attempted to scale the bank, and falling backwards had crushed his rider. He was yet alive;—the bloody foam was slowly oozing from his lips as they brought him in and laid him upon me; while the stricken mother knelt, and wiped and kissed those lips in tearless agony. She knew there was no hope,—her idol was shattered, and the stillness of death was upon her soul. Henry expired that night without recognizing any one. His poor mother shed no tear, nor did she ever smile again; but went about mechanically performing her accustomed duties. Each day she pined, and I saw her become pale and languid, until at last she ceased to take her wonted seat; and I knew from the sobs around that she too was dead. The other children were all daughters save one, and were mild and gentle creatures, to whom the sense of their motherless condition gave an habitual sadness. They were doomed to be yet more sad! Mr. H— married again;—the new wife had no sympathy with her stepchildren, and was tyrannical to all under her control. She was jealous of merit in others, and suspicious to a degree that rendered it unpleasant even to converse with her. The daughters, trembling and with many tears, submitted to her iron sway; but their brother Edward rebelled, and at last set her authority at open defiance. Mr. H—, instigated by his wife, banished his son, though a mere boy, from his home. The night before he quitted the paternal mansion, poor Edward came, after all the family had retired, into the room in which I was, and throwing himself upon me, sobbed as if his young indignant heart would break.

Some years afterwards I was sent by Mr. H— to a retired little cottage owned by him, in a remote part of the country, where I rarely saw any of the family. Here I remained till Edward grew up to man's estate, and the cottage and its furniture were given to him. His father died soon after he came into possession. I am still owned by Edward's children. Their fortunes, like my own, have been changeful, and are now humbler than at first. But content and peace are theirs; and the battered, time-worn sofa, with its covering of modest chintz, is now treated with a degree of consideration not always accorded to it in its days of youthful splendour. I enjoy the luxury of being useful, and of imparting oft a truthful lesson; and never regret my past magnificence. The dreams of vanity are faded, and vanished to return no more. But I am far happier in my present unobtrusive simplicity, and wait with patience for the inevitable hour of my dismissal from the homes of the living.

## HE QUESTIONETH THE SYMPATHY OF NATURE.

### A DISCOURSE.

BY ERNEST HELFENSTEIN.

MAN sitteth in the midst of a crowd. He looketh into the very face of his brother, and yet it is strange to him—for a veil is upon it. He covereth the soul in terror from a creature like himself, which at the same time he dares reveal to the majesty of heaven with all its defacements.

Shrinking from human scrutiny, he still findeth security in numbers; strong in the aggregate, but weak and defenceless apart. He congregates in masses, for it is his nature to do so; and he gains power morally and physically by this attrition of mind upon mind—this magnetism of atom upon atom. He feelth the pulsations of his own heart akin to those about him, and thence he deriveth a moral grandeur.

Cowardly and weak by himself, he planteth a living, breathing wall, and thus breasteth the cannon's mouth. When the iron foot of oppression is crushed upon his sinews, an under-ground swell ariseth. It is the great voice of a common nature appealing to its fellow;—it is the sound at whose vibrations thrones topple to the earth.

Man herdeth in cities; yet his individual nature is not forgotten—for walls are built up, and bolts and bars are affixed; and midnight lamps, and sentinels, and prisons and tortures and gibbets. Thus he seeketh companionship, and yet dwelleth as in a brotherhood of Cains!

There cometh war, and pestilence, and famine. Man scanneth coldly the ties of companionship. He is appalled at the gaunt looks of his neighbour; he clutcheth for the morsel of bread, and struggleth for the free air.

Then he dieth by the way-side, mindless of birth or kin;—then he goeth forth pale and terror-stricken, for human compacts are severed, and he casteth about his suspicious eyes, beholding a foe in every human shape; and thus he deserteth his goodly palaces!

The voice of suffering, of business, or pleasure, ceaseth from the city. Silence broodeth at the gates. The spider spinneth her drapery; the bat hangeth from the cornice, and the foot of the fox patteth the marble hall. Columns sway to the earth, and the serpent basketh upon architecture. The gray moss and the green vine seize companionship upon the lattice, and huge trees shadow the court where the fountain sent up its melody.

Silence broodeth at the gates! Listen! Do you not hear Nature at her laboratory? Silently she upheaveth the marble pavement to reveal the sheen-like grass. A mound ariseth, small indeed,

yet constructed by one of her agents; and now a dusky mole darteth from its covert. The green lizard glideth in its burnished mail, and feareth not the foot of man.

This capsule of moss, filled with the dews of the morning, hath found a resting in the very eyes of a statue, that once might have filled an artist with all of Pygmalion's yearning. This blossom is planted upon a tomb;—it may have been that of the lovely, the beloved!

Turn away! Nature heedeth thee not. She worketh ever at her beautiful creations, filling the waste and desolate places, shrouding man and his works with her own gay mantle, or whispering, "Let the perturbed rest."

And thus she husheth the great desert where he hath been, and worketh by herself till he is forgotten. Ages on ages she steadfastly filleth her bowers with beauty; rounding with lichen, and dropping with vine, till the poor dreamer beneath and the memory of his works have ceased from the earth.

Nature hath no sympathy with the dream-worker who moveth in her midst, a strange mystery, creating like herself, indeed, yet all that he doeth to be ere long covered by her own gray pall, till ready for the sepulchre.

Is it thus with all that he doeth? Ask thyself, dream-child. Shall all things perish with thee? Rest not till a response cometh from thine own breast that shall fill thee with awe and with hope.

Nature hath no sympathy with thee. It is the life within thee, that imparteth the glory thou dost behold in her. Hope and life are buoyant within thee, and the blue sky and the green earth become a part of thy blessedness. Peace foldeth her wings about thee, and tranquillity is born of the warm air, the soft shadows, and the lipping waters.

Love!—alas! poor dreamer, awake thou not—love hath cast his spell about thee, and a new voice of harmony, a sweet language of divine affinities, breatheth ever in thine ears. Bird and blossom, earth and sky, reveal a deeper and holier aspect.

Unloved, unappreciated, hopeless, despairing, appeal not now to Nature. She hath no mood of sympathy;—she looketh coldly upon thee. Mindful of her own labour, she heedeth not the anguish of thy heart. Her beautiful works apart from thee, chill thee with a double sense of desolation. She stayeth not a single development that thou art in anguish of spirit. She worketh on, on, even as though thou hadst no existence.

The life is within thyself. It is thou who dost

impart the gladness and the beauty. Nature is a dove. She worketh by fixed laws—day by day dissolving and renewing. Ages on ages findeth her still the same, working out forms, the types of which exist in thine own breast.

Thou hast emotions born of earth—content with earth, and to these she seemeth to respond. Anon come those infinite yearnings, those deep, unutterable mysteries, that neither language nor earth may typify; still thou findest nature busy at the many angled crystal, painting the blossom, singing in woodland bower and gushing waterfall, ever the same—and she hath no response in thine appeal for sympathy.

Alas! dost thou not awake to feel that thine is a nobler destiny—that this intense solitude, which nature, so genial in all common emotions, helpeth

now to press upon the heart, pointeth to a something beyond? She whispereth in thine ear—“Thou hast opened the seventh seal of human life, and what thou beholdest is hidden from me. My ministry is accomplished. Thou art entering within the veil. Thou hast borne the image of the earthly, now also shalt thou bear the image of the heavenly.”

Mourn not that thy proud Talmud become the ruin of the desert; that the places that now know thee in thy majesty and the grandeur of thy creative energy, shall soon know thee no more and forever. Here thy skill is at work in the things that perish; yet do thy conceptions stretch onward to the unseen and the eternal, and therein is thy glory, thy strength, and thine unfailing source of joy.

## I W I L L !

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"You look sober, Laura. What has thrown a veil over your happy face?" said Mrs. Cleaveland to her niece, one morning, on finding her alone, and with a very thoughtful countenance.

"Do I really look sober?" and Laura smiled as she spoke.

"You did just now. But the sunshine has already dispelled the transient cloud. I am glad that a storm was not portended."

"I felt sober, aunt," Laura said, after a few moments—her face again becoming serious.

"So I supposed, from your looks."

"And I feel sober still."

"Why?"

"I am really discouraged, aunt."

"About what?"

The maiden's cheek deepened its hue, but she did not reply.

"You and Harry have not fallen out like a pair of foolish lovers, I hope."

"Oh, no!" was the quick and emphatic answer.

"Then what has troubled the quiet waters of your spirit? About what are you discouraged?"

"I will tell you," the maiden replied. "It was only about a week after my engagement with Harry that I called upon Alice Stacy and found her quite unhappy. She had not been married over a few months. I asked what troubled her, and she said, 'I feel as miserable as I can be.' 'But what makes you miserable, Alice?' I inquired. 'Because, William and I have quarrelled—that's the reason,' she said, with some levity, tossing her head and compressing her lips with a kind of defiance. I was shocked—so much so, that I could not speak. 'The fact is,' she resumed, before I could reply, 'all men are arbitrary and unreasonable. They think women inferior to them, and their wives as a higher order of slaves. But I am not one to be put under any man's feet. William has tried that trick with me, and failed. Of course, to be foiled by a woman is no very pleasant thing for one of your lords of creation. A tempest in a teapot was the consequence. But I did not yield the point in dispute; and what is more, have no idea of doing so. He will have to find out, sooner or later, that I am his equal in every way; and the quicker he can be made conscious of this, the better for us both. Don't you think so?' I made no answer. I was too much surprised and shocked. 'All men,' she continued, 'have to be taught this. There never was a husband who did not, at first, attempt to lord it over his wife. And there never was a woman, whose condition as a wife was at all above that of a passive slave, who did not find it

necessary to oppose herself at first with unflinching perseverance.'

"To all this, and a great deal more, I could say nothing. It choked me up. Since then, I have met her frequently, at home and elsewhere, but she has never looked happy. Several times she has said to me, in company, when I have taken a seat beside her, and remarked that she seemed dull, 'Yes, I am dull; but Mr. Stacy there, you see, enjoys himself. Men always enjoy themselves in company—apart from their wives, of course.' I would sometimes oppose to this a sentiment palliative of her husband; as, that in company, a man very naturally wished to add his mite to the general joyousness, or something of a like nature. But it only excited her, and drew forth remarks that shocked my feelings. Up to this day they do not appear to be on any better terms. Then, there is Frances Glenn—married only three months, and as fond of carping at her husband for his arbitrary, domineering spirit, as is Mrs. Stacy. I could name two or three others who have been married, some a shorter and some a longer period, that do not seem to be united by any closer bonds.

"It is the condition of these young friends, aunt, that causes me to feel serious. I am to be married in a few weeks. Can it be possible that my union with Henry Armour will be no happier, no more perfect than theirs? This I cannot believe. And yet, the relation that Alice and Frances hold to their husbands, troubles me whenever I think of it. Henry, as far as I have been able to understand him, has strong points in his character. From a right course of action,—or, from a course of action that he thinks right,—no consideration, I am sure, would turn him. I, too, have mental characteristics somewhat similar. There is, likewise, about me a leaven of stubbornness. I tremble when the thought of opposition between us, upon any subject, crosses my mind. I would rather die—so I feel about it—than ever have a misunderstanding with my husband."

Laura ceased, and her aunt, who was, she now perceived, much agitated, arose and left the room without speaking. The reason of this to Laura was altogether unaccountable. Her aunt Cleaveland, always so mild, so calm, to be thus strongly disturbed! What could it mean? What could there be in her maidenly fears to excite the feelings of one so good, and wise and gentle? An hour afterwards, and while she yet sat, sober and perplexed in mind, in the same place where Mrs. Cleaveland had left her, a domestic came in and said that her aunt wished to see her in her own

room. Laura attended her immediately. She found her calm and self-possessed, but paler than usual.

"Sit down beside me, dear," Mrs. Cleaveland said, smiling faintly, as her niece came in.

"What you said this morning, Laura," she began, after a few moments, "recalled my own early years so vividly, that I could not keep down emotions I had deemed long since powerless. The cause of those emotions it is now, I clearly see, my duty to reveal—that is, to you. For years I have carefully avoided permitting my mind to go back to the past in vain musings over scenes that bring no pleasant thoughts, no glad feelings. I have, rather, looked into the future with a steady hope, a calm reliance. But, for your sake, I will draw aside the veil. May the relation I am now about to give you have the effect I desire. Then shall I not suffer in vain. How vividly, at this moment, do I remember the joyful feelings that pervaded my bosom when, like you, a maiden, I looked forward to my wedding day. Mr. Cleaveland was a man, in many respects, like Henry Armour. Proud, firm, yet gentle and amiable when not opposed;—a man with whom I might have been supremely happy;—a man whose faults I might have corrected—not by open opposition to them—not by seeming to notice them,—but by leading him to see them himself. But this course I did not pursue. I was proud; I was self-willed; I was unyielding. Elements like these can never come into opposition without a victory on either side being as disastrous as the defeats. We were married. Oh, how sweet was the promise of my wedding day! Of my husband I was very fond. Handsome, educated, and with talents of a high order, there was every thing about him to make the heart of a young wife proud. Tenderly we loved each other. Like days in Elysium passed the first few months of our wedded life. Our thoughts and wishes were one. After that, gradually a change appeared to come over my husband. He deferred less readily to my wishes. His own will was more frequently opposed to mine, and his contentions for victory longer and longer continued. This surprised and pained me. But it did not occur to me, that my tenaciousness of opinion might seem as strange to him as did his to me. It did not occur to me, that there would be a propriety in my deferring to him—at least so far as to give up opposition. I never for a moment reflected that a proud, firm-spirited man, might be driven off from an opposing wife, rather than drawn closer, and united in tenderer bonds. I only perceived my rights as an equal assailed. And from that point of view, saw his conduct as dogmatical and overbearing, whenever he resolutely set himself against me, as was far too frequently the case.

"One day,—we had then been married about six months,—he said to me, a little seriously, yet smiling as he spoke, 'Jane, did not I see you on the street this morning?' 'You did,' I replied. 'And with Mrs. Corbin?' 'Yes.' My answer to this last question was not given in a very pleasant

tone. The reason was this. Mrs. Corbin, a recent acquaintance, was no favourite with my husband; and he had more than once mildly suggested that she was not, in his view, a fit associate for me. This rather touched my pride. It occurred to me, that I ought to be the best judge of my female associates, and that for my husband to make any objections was an assumption on his part, that, as a wife, I was called upon to resist. I did not, on previous occasions, say any thing very decided, contenting myself with parrying his objections laughingly. This time, however, I was in a less forbearing mood. 'I wish you would not make that woman your friend,' he said, after I had admitted that he was right in his observation. 'And why not, pray?' I asked, looking at him quite steadily. 'For reasons before given, Jane,' he replied, mildly, but firmly. 'There are reports in circulation touching her character that I fear are —.' 'They are false!' I interrupted him. 'I know they are false!' I spoke with a sudden excitement. My voice trembled, my cheek burned, and I was conscious that my eye shot forth no mild light. 'They are true—I know they are true!' Mr. Cleaveland said, sternly, but apparently unruffled. 'I don't believe it,' I retorted. 'I know her far better. She is an injured woman.'

"'Jane,' my husband now said, his voice slightly trembling,—you are my wife. As such, your reputation is dear to me as the apple of my eye. Suspicion has been cast upon Mrs. Corbin, and that suspicion I have good reason for believing well founded. If you associate with her—if you are seen upon the street with her, your fair fame will receive a taint. This I cannot permit.'

"There was, to my mind, a threat contained in the last sentence—a threat of authoritative intervention. At this my pride took fire.

"'Cannot permit,' I said, drawing myself up. 'What do you mean, Mr. Cleaveland?'

"The brow of my husband instantly flushed. He was silent for a moment or two. Then he said, with forced calmness, yet in a resolute, meaning tone,

"'Jane, I do not wish you to keep company with Mrs. Corbin.'

"'I WILL!' was my indignant reply.

"His face grew deadly pale. For a moment his whole frame trembled as if some fearful struggle were going on within. Then he quietly arose, and without looking at me, left the room. Oh! how deeply did I regret uttering those unhappy words the instant they were spoken! But repentance came too late. For about the space of ten minutes, pride struggled with affection and duty. At the end of that time the latter triumphed, and I hastened after my husband to ask his forgiveness for what I had said. But he was not in the parlours. He was not in the house! I asked a servant if she had seen him, and received for reply that he had gone out.

"Anxiously passed the hours until nightfall. The sad twilight, as it gathered dimly around,

threw a deeper gloom over my heart. My husband usually came home before dark. Now he was away beyond his accustomed hour. Instead of returning gladly to meet his young wife, he was staying away, because that young wife had thrown off the attractions of love and presented to him features harsh and repulsive. How anxiously I longed to hear the sound of his footsteps—to see his face—to hear his voice. The moment of his entrance I resolved should be the moment of my humble confession of wrong—of my faithful promise never again to set up my will determinedly in opposition to his judgment. But minute after minute passed after nightfall—hours succeeded minutes—and these rolled on until the whole night wore away, and he came not back to me. As the gray light of morning stole into my chamber, a terrible fear took hold of me that made my heart grow still in my bosom—the fear that he would never return—that I had driven him off from me. Alas! this fear was too high the truth. The whole of that day passed, and the next and the next, without any tidings. No one had seen him since he left me. An anxious excitement spread among all his friends. The only account I could give of him, was that he had parted from me in good health, and in a sane mind.

“A week rolled by, and still no word came. I was nearly distracted. What I suffered no tongue can tell, no heart conceive. I have often wondered that I did not become insane. But, from this sad condition I was saved. Through all, my reason, though often trembling, did not once forsake me. It was on the tenth day from that upon which we had jarred so heavily as to be driven widely asunder, that a letter came to me, post marked New York, and endorsed ‘In haste.’ My hands trembled so that I could with difficulty break the seal. The contents were to the effect that my husband had been lying for several days at one of the hotels there, very ill, but now past the crisis of his disease, and thought by the physician to be out of danger. The writer urged me, from my husband, to come on immediately. In eight hours from the time I received that letter I was in New York. Alas! it was too late. The disease had returned with double violence, and snapped the feeble thread of life. I never saw my husband’s living face again.”

The self-possession of Mrs. Cleaveland, at this part of her narrative, gave way. Covering her face with her hands, she sobbed violently, while the tears came trickling through her fingers.

“My dear Laura,” she resumed, after the lapse of many minutes, looking up as she spoke with a clear eye, and a sober, but placid countenance, “it is for your sake that I have turned my gaze resolutely back. May the painful history I have given you make a deep impression upon your heart. Let it warn you of the sunken rock upon which my bark foundered. Avoid carefully, religiously avoid, setting yourself in opposition to your husband. Should he prove unreasonable, or arbitrary, nothing

is to be gained, and every thing lost by contention. By gentleness, by forbearance, by even suffering wrong at times, you will be able to win him over to a better spirit. An opposite course will as assuredly put thorns in your pillow as you adopt it. Look at the unhappy condition of the friends you have named. Their husbands are, in their eyes, exacting, domineering tyrants. But this need not be. Let them act truly the woman’s part. Let them not oppose, but yield, and they will find that their present tyrants will become their lovers. Above all, never, under any circumstances, either jestingly or in earnest, say ‘I will,’ when you are opposed. That declaration is never made without its robbing the wife of a portion of her husband’s confidence and love. Its utterance has dimmed the fire upon many a smiling hearth-stone.”

Laura could not reply. The relation of her aunt had deeply shocked her feelings. But the words she had uttered sunk into her heart; and when her trial came—when she was tempted to set her will in opposition to her husband’s, and resolutely to contend for what she deemed right, a thought of Mrs. Cleaveland’s story would put a seal upon her lips. It was well. The character of Henry Armour too nearly resembled that of Mr. Cleaveland. He could ill have brooked a wife’s opposition. But her tenderness, her forbearance, her devoted love, bound her to him with cords that drew closer and closer each revolving year. She never opposed him further than to express a difference of opinion when such a difference existed, and its utterance was deemed useful; and she carefully avoided, on all occasions, the doing of any thing that he in the smallest degree disapproved. The consequence was, that her opinion was always weighed by him carefully, and often deferred to. A mutual confidence, and a mutual dependence upon each other, gradually took the place of early reserves, and now they sweetly draw together—now they smoothly glide along the stream of life blessed indeed in all their marriage relations. Who will say that Laura did not act a wise part? Who will say, that in sacrificing pride and self-will, she did not gain beyond all calculation? No one, surely. She is not her husband’s slave, but his companion and equal. She has helped to reform, to remodel his character, and make him less arbitrary, less self-willed, less disposed to be tyrannical. In her mild forbearance, he has seen a beauty more attractive far than lip or cheek, or beaming eye. Instead of looking upon his wife as below him, Henry Armour feels that she is his superior, and as such, he tenderly regards and lovingly cherishes her. He never thinks of obedience from her, but rather studies to conform himself to her most lightly spoken wish. To be thus united, what wife will not for a time sacrifice her feelings when her young self-willed husband so far forgets himself as to become exacting? The temporary loss will turn out in the future to be a great gain.

## SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF MY GREAT AUNT.

BY MISS JANE W. FRAZER.

My great aunt was a woman of strong mind and stronger nerves. She was, in truth, a great woman—both body and spirit being on a grand scale. And it was long her favourite boast, that she had a “frame of iron and a heart of stone.” Yet that the rock was capable of being softened, may be inferred from the fact of her having been twice led to the hymeneal altar. She had had great personal loveliness; but at the period of my earliest recollections, she might have passed for the twin sister of Daniel Lambert, of monstrous memory, or for one of the infant brood of Gog and Magog, whose effigies so long adorned the church of St. Dunstan, in the far-famed city of London.

My great aunt loved talking; but she had not passed on the journey of life without using her eyes and ears as well as her tongue, so that, in the course of fifty or sixty years, she had collected an amazing fund of anecdote, which, together with her known skill in compounding pies, cakes, jellies and sweetmeats, made the stated visits of the children of the family a jubilee to which they looked forward with unmixed delight. I was always a dear lover of stories, and I can well remember the greedy attention with which I hung upon her words while seated in the little high-backed straw chair at her feet,—the wide tile-lined chimney sending up its volumes of sparkling flame, illuminating the small, curiously papered room, and throwing the shadows of the heavy old-fashioned mahogany furniture in grotesque figures on the wall.

Sometimes her legends recited the loves and deeds of my ancestors; the fair smirking dames, in stomachers and point lace; and the venerable-looking gentlemen, whose gold embroidery and huge wigs, adorned with flowing masses of snow-white curls, denoted the high stations they had filled before the glory of royalty had departed from the land. Their portraits hung in heavy carved frames round the apartment, while the space over the ample mantel-piece was filled by some half dozen, more than half naked; white-haired little children, my aunts and uncles, who were distinguishable from each other only by the choice of their pets and playthings; and to attain this desirable end, the painter had nearly exhausted the beauties of the animal and vegetable creation.

My great aunt, as I have already mentioned, had been twice married. Her first establishment had been the provident care of her friends, who were scrupulous in their selection of wealth, birth and station equal to her own. But when the hand of death had broken the fetters which had been imposed on her youth, and set her once more free, she

exercised the privilege of her recovered liberty by choosing for herself the exact counterpart of him whom she had duly mourned in all the “pomp and circumstance of woe.”

Captain R— was a handsome, frank, fearless soldier of fortune, who was only too happy to be permitted to lay his freshly gathered laurels at her feet, and to learn the duty of submitting to a new commander.

The woman who believes she has *condescended* in the choice of a helpmate, seldom fails to indemnify herself for any loss of consequence which she may have sustained. In this particular, my great aunt did not deviate from the wise customs of her sex. In short, they were a notoriously happy couple; for, in process of time, my great aunt imbibed the political opinions of her husband, and thus was removed the sole temptation to rebellion which had ever caused domestic dissension in their household. Finally, she deserted entirely from the tory ranks, and ever after kept up a sort of running fire of *small shot* against her ancient allies. To do her justice, she never harboured malice on a large scale—her faults being among the few small things in her composition. But it was ever one of my sins in her estimation, that my progenitors had well learned and always remembered the inseparable lesson to “fear God and honour the king;” and many and earnest were her endeavours that the scions of the stock should be nurtured at the fresh well-springs of patriotism.

When sometimes wearied of often repeated tales of rapine and murder, and shrinking from the exaggerated details of the evils and cruelties inseparably attendant on intestine war, it was my practice, by sly intimation or artfully expressed opposition to some particular opinion, to lead the good lady to the discussion of themes more congenial to my age and taste. And it was amusing to see the eagerness with which she would fall into the snare, and the avidity with which she would pursue the topics to which I had drawn her attention.

My great aunt had been educated in all the easy faith of ignorance and credulity. But in her, superstition was not weakness; she held its belief without admitting its fears. It was the seed which, implanted in early life, had taken root in a strong and tenacious soil; and though shooting forth into thorns and thistles, still the plants were hardy and vigorous, and could never be eradicated. Few events occurred, in the even tenor of her ways, which had not been foretold by some prognostics; and every object in nature was made instrumental as signs and tokens of her minor prophecies.

Purses and coffins were indicated by sparks from the fire; funeral processions and wedding festivities might be spied in the bottom of her teacup; the noisy master of the poultry yard advised her of a coming guest; and the falling of her scissors ascertained that the expected visitor was also a stranger. But chiefly she was wont to dwell with thrilling interest on those well attested tales on which she grounded her implicit confidence in the reappearance of departed spirits. On this long contested point her faith was undoubting and unshaken; and many a blanched cheek and quivering lip has admonished her to break the thread of her narrative in compassion to her little auditory. The strange mysterious awe which bewildered and affrighted, yet had invisible charms for me, and I usually seized the earliest opportunity to induce her to resume the discourse.

The feverish excitement of my mind, under this powerful stimulus of the imagination, might have been productive of the most pernicious consequences to my character and happiness through life, had it not been fortunately counteracted by the judicious management and watchful care which I met with at home. Yet I long felt its baneful effects on my senses, and my heart often quailed under its influence. Reason must struggle hard for the victory when her opponents have twined themselves with our earliest prejudices.

Among the various recitals which "froze my young blood," and yet, by a species of magic, kept me spell-bound, as if touched by the rod of the enchantress, was one which, relating to herself, and the facts, not resting on tradition or report, but vouched for on the credit of her own unimpeached veracity, made an impression not to be obliterated from my memory by succeeding years, or the various changes of a not uneventful life.

My great aunt, with all her well-merited influence over the actions of her second husband, had never been able to reduce his opinions to the same subordination, though the severity of her discipline made it advisable to conceal the rebellious principle under the semblance of obedience. Yet she often suspected the pious fraud; and, ever and anon, by way of exercise, would encourage him to try his strength in the debate.

One evening, the harvest moon was in its loveliest splendour, and threw its long lines of silvery radiance on the placid waters of the beautiful bay, on which their residence was situated. The sweet summer breeze wafted on its gentle wing the fragrance of unnumbered flowers, and the busy hum of the crowded city, which lay behind them, had died away till its faint murmurs scarce reached the ear. The holy calm, which the repose of nature breathed around, might have produced in the least romantic of human hearts, elevated thoughts and devout meditations;—those of my great aunt and uncle were touched with unusual tenderness. On the morrow they were to part for an indefinite period. Hope cheered them with the prospect of a speedy reunion; but to those who truly love, even

a short separation is painful, and often gives birth to serious, if not solemn meditations, and vague apprehensions of future evil. My great aunt's firm soul shrank not, though at that very moment her awakened spirit saw, with prescient eye, beyond the dark curtain of futurity, and was sadly conscious of the impending ill. The mysterious intimation was evidenced by the resistless impulse to require a solemn promise from her beloved companion, that should they never meet on earth again, the departed spirit should return to its former haunts, and appear visibly to the survivor. Such compacts, however presumptuous they may be, have been often entered into. It could not therefore have been the singularity of the request that startled him, yet he was sensibly agitated.

But recovering from a transient emotion, of which he was a little ashamed, he pledged himself to the performance of all that she desired, as far as Divine wisdom should permit. The time and place were precisely specified; even the interval that should be allowed to elapse after the dissolution of the ties which bind the immortal and immaterial soul to its corporeal partner, was clearly stated. And then the whole transaction was dismissed from the mind of the sceptic as a weakness to which a wise man and a brave soldier should hardly have submitted.

He left home the next morning, high in health, in the vigour of manhood, buoyant with cheerful animation, and a constitutional gaiety which saw nothing in the long vista of coming years but honours, prosperity and happiness. A few short days afterwards he lay on the bed of death. A violent fever, the consequence of over exertion on a hunting party, put a speedy termination to his existence.

My great aunt bore the intelligence of this calamity with the heroic fortitude which had marked every event of her life; and her grief was, perhaps, softened by a secret exultation in the verification of her prediction. Be that as it may, the thought which chiefly occupied her was the promised visitation, to which she looked forward with certainty. Her spirit was elevated by constant anticipations of the revelations of the unseen world, for which she had so long thirsted, and which were now on the point of being disclosed.

In this frame of mind, she received the condolences of her friends and relatives with an air of coldness and pre-occupation that surprised and disconcerted them, and rendered wholly superfluous the moral apothegms and threadbare consolations which had been brought forth and prepared for the occasion. All the energy of her spirit, all her natural activity and promptitude of action, were put into requisition to hasten the preparations for her removal into the country at the usual period of the winter migration; and after some necessary delay, to which she submitted with ill-disguised impatience, she proceeded to the family seat, attended only by her personal servants, having peremptorily declined all society and companionship.



For three successive nights, she repaired at the appointed hour to the dark and solitary apartment which had been selected as the scene of this singular nocturnal interview. With untiring perseverance she prolonged her anxious vigil till the gray light of morning dismissed her, restless, excited and disappointed, to her sleepless pillow. She wandered with disturbed and hasty step from place to place during the day; sometimes almost persuaded of the inutility of continuing her nightly watch, and then, by a sudden transition of feeling, clinging with renewed ardour to a belief which had become one of the most cherished articles of her creed. One night more, and if again she watched in vain, she must, however reluctantly, yield to conviction. Again she dismissed her attendants, and with renovated hope and invigorated resolution, resumed her post. But scarcely had an hour passed away, when, suddenly, a dazzling light illuminated every part of her chamber; for a second, she was blinded by its excessive brilliancy. Her heart beat with tumultuous violence; she passed her hand over her eyes to clear her vision, and saw, receding along the wall, at the extremity of the apartment, a figure of colossal dimensions, which was passing rapidly onwards. She rushed forward; she stretched out her arms to arrest its flight; she would have supplicated for its stay, but her voice failed, and she sank senseless on the floor.

The heavy sound of her fall aroused the domestics, who in alarm hastened to the spot, and on discovering her situation, removed her to her own chamber, where she was instantly put to bed. The fainting fit in which she had been found, was succeeded by a lethargic stupor, which rendered medical advice necessary. But on the entire recovery of her health, she would give no account of the cause which had led to so unusual a seizure. To one person alone, the dearest friend of her deceased husband, was she at length prevailed on to reveal it. In vain did he endeavour to explain the supernatural appearance, which she firmly believed

herself to have witnessed; and after much useless discussion, the argument was closed on her side by a positive prohibition of the subject for ever after.

But as this gentleman was a person little disposed to admit with blind credulity the existence of facts, against which the testimony of his reason revolted, he made a most minute investigation into every circumstance that might be, however remotely, connected with the event or tend to the elucidation of the mystery.

After the most indefatigable inquiry, he succeeded so far as to ascertain, that on the night above-mentioned, two of the slaves had agreed to make a secret visit to a neighbouring plantation, and in order to escape detection, they had taken a circuitous route which lay near the back part of the dwelling house, nearly beneath the windows of the retired apartment in which their mistress was seated in silence and darkness. The night was murky and obscure, and they had provided themselves with large flaming torches, of a bituminous dry pine, which emits a strong, red, glaring light. The shutters had been left accidentally unclosed, and the flashing of their rustic flambeaux against the white wall, occasioned the sudden illumination. The colossal figure was naturally enough accounted for as the reflection of one of the men, enlarged to uncouth and extravagant proportions; and the excited imagination of my great aunt was sufficient answer for the effect.

Time rolled on, till the garrulity of "narrative old age" broke through the barriers of jealous reserve which had hitherto guarded the long cherished secret. The habit of brooding over it in silence had but fixed it more firmly in her belief, and a memory become treacherous as to events of every day occurrence, treasured with peculiar care and maintained with petulant pertinacity every circumstance corroborative of opinions which had gathered strength, even from the wreck of intellect, which marked the closing years of her life.

## THE FAIRY CHAIN.

BY MISS ANNA FLEMING.

"PLEASE your majesty, two of your majesty's subjects are fighting so, there is no doing any thing with them."

The Queen of the Fairies frowned, shook her little head, and said, angrily—

"Fighting! there is too much of this. Not a day passes but I am disturbed with complaints against some of you. Who is it now?"

"Two of the mountain troop, your majesty."

"Well, let them be bound and brought to me immediately."

The fairy page bowed low, and flew away.

In a short time, the queen's commands were obeyed. The two refractory little people who had incurred her displeasure appeared before her, sorrow stricken and tearful. All the court crowded round to listen.

"What is the matter?" asked the queen, with as much dignity as she was able to command.

"Why, your majesty," said one, "as long as she is to be on the mountain, I can't live there, and I declare I won't."

"And if your majesty would be pleased to exile her from the dominions —"

"Silence; I will have no reproaches. Is there any particular cause of dispute between you? If there is, let it be produced."

At this, a rattling noise was heard on the staircase without; and the above-mentioned page entered, drawing after him a slender chain of fine gold, which he laid at her majesty's feet.

"Where did this come from?" asked the queen, surveying it with admiration. "It seems to be of mortal make, though beautiful enough for fairy-land."

"I found it in the grass, your majesty."

"Will you hold your tongue? It was I found it, your majesty."

"Hush, can't you! I saw it first, gracious sovereign."

"But I picked it up."

"My children," said the queen, "you have done very wrong. Instead of following my peaceful example, you have, from what I hear, been disturbing those around you by quarrelling and disputing, to which even my presence has not put an end. To this, you have added the sin of covetousness, one which, I fear, is increasing in my dominions. To prevent its spreading farther, I will confiscate the article in question to my own use. Let it be taken to my treasury."

The page stepped forward and removed the chain; as he did so, a murmur ran round the assembly;—the queen thought it was applause. The

two criminals, although biting their lips for disappointment, rejoiced secretly, each in the other's discomfiture.

"But this is not all;" said the queen, "your conduct needs severer punishment. Listen, then—I exile you both from fairyland for the space of one year. I condemn you to wander over the earth, and you to traverse the upper and lower regions,—the air and the water,—seeking, each of you, as you go, a chain far more beautiful and more enduring than the one in question."

"But how are we to find such a chain, your majesty?"

"Seek diligently all around you, and link by link you will find it. Deem nothing too small, nothing too great. Go now! I await your return in a year from to-day."

Mournfully and sadly, the fairies turned away and set out on their separate paths.

"Where," said one of them to herself,—the one whose travels were to be upon earth,—"where can I ever find such a chain. Our queen said it would be link by link. If I could but see the first one. I will look about for it."

The scene was a forest. Tall trees raised their heads high in the air, higher than she could see, and the use of her wings was denied her now. The gnarled and twisted roots crossed the little pathway repeatedly, and in one place she saw that they formed a circle.

"Our queen said we must deem nothing too small, so for want of a better, I will make this my first link. Now for a second."

And stooping down, she saw upon the ground innumerable little insects hastening hither and thither, backwards and forwards, in search of food, forming ring after ring in their various courses from tree to tree, so that by evening she had completed some yards of the chain; and climbing a flower, she slept soundly till morning.

By sunrise she was up, and crossing a stile into a flower garden, was soon busy again. At the gate, a little boy had hung a string of birds' eggs over the topmost rail. The gardener was trimming the beds into various fanciful curved forms; an untrained vine with its curled branches hung on the ground, and on the top of a smooth-shaved holly bush, a snake was coiled up fast asleep.

When the wind blew in the fields, the corn swayed backwards and forwards in graceful circles, meeting, intertwining and receding. A woodman felt something stay his axe;—it was the fairy's hand busy with the rings that the growth of years had laid upon the half chopped tree.

The fairy came to a village. At the very entrance there was a circle of footpaths, where some merry children had been playing. Unseen to mortal eyes, she walked up the little street, and in every house, in every room, she found new rings—links of the great chain she was discovering so speedily. We could not tell them all if we were to try; but any body who, like the fairy, will look, may see them.

And here there were some more spiritual links disclosed to her—the kind deed returning to bless the doer, the bread cast upon the waters to return after many days.

Frightened with the noise and bustle, she so-journed for a time in cities; but here, for some distance, the links were of art—man's work upon God's materials.

And the other fairy,—her sister,—where was she all this time? Immediately upon receiving the queen's command, she raised her wings and was soon high in the air; and on her travels, taking with her wreaths of smoke from cottage chimneys, and many and many a spreading sound, for chasing one another in quick succession, came rings of laughter from the village merry-making. The fairy laughed too, as she strung them together; she knew not how short-lived is mortal merriment.

Farther on, there were troops marching, and she had to fly very fast to overtake their mournful sounds. But what the east wind made her lose, she made up with slow tones from the church bell; for she hovered an instant to look at a military funeral. And here she caught a glimpse of her sister, linking a sword belt that lay on the bier to a knot of blue ribbon dropped by the village belle, and adding them both to a plain gold ring on a woman's finger.

After a long time spent in the air, the fairy remembered the queen's commands, and betook herself to the waters. Here she was very busy, collecting the rings that lay all around her in beautiful profusion. Most of the time she was under water, but whenever she saw a circle spreading over her head, she hastened to the surface to catch it. Sometimes it was the dash of an oar from a little boat; sometimes a song from some one at the oarsman's side; sometimes a water spider darting along. It was all alike to the fairy—all alike; link upon link was her object. And sometimes she was mischievous. A girl dropped a bracelet into the water, and before her exclamation at her sudden loss was finished, the fairy was laughing, and running a piece of channel grass through it on one side and the crownless rim of a beggar's hat on the other.

But to tell all her discoveries would be as impossible as to recount those of her sister. Suffice it to say, that one day she was amusing herself by riding on the top of a high wave, and suffering herself to be carried on shore by it. She found herself on the very spot where she shed her first tears upon being exiled from fairyland.

Looking round with delight, she heard her name pronounced in a tone of surprise and of joy;—a

name not to be spelled intelligibly to mortal ears, so fine and small was it.

The fairy started—her sister stood beside her. Long and affectionate was their embrace. All former animosity was forgotten in the joy at meeting again and relating their respective adventures.

"Here is the root from which I set out a year ago. I will make a hole in the bottom of this bird's nest, and then let us hasten to our queen. I am sure she will be satisfied with us."

"I know she will."

The queen of the fairies sat in state upon her throne. Her ministers stood respectfully around.

"Is the banquet table spread?" asked the sovereign.

"Very nearly, your majesty."

"Let every thing be in readiness; and let some one bring me that gold chain from the treasury."

"Your majesty's commands shall all be obeyed."

"I wonder who in the world is expected to-day?" whispered the keeper of the robes to the high chamberlain.

"I'm sure I don't know; and, you know, one dares not ask."

"No," sighed the keeper of the robes. "But such tremendous preparations! Why, almost all our people have been up all night."

"Yes; and poor what's his name there, had to press the juice out of five large grapes yesterday."

"It's ridiculous!"

"Invitations have been sent to a great distance. I carried some of them myself. Do you know any of the valley fairies?"

"No! but I know one thing, that if any of them are to be at the banquet, the queen will have to do without me."

"What's that?"

"Some one at the gates. They may knock a good while before I will open it for them."

Another knock, and the little folding doors were opened, and hand in hand the little wanderers entered; and approaching the queen, knelt down before her.

"Welcome back to fairyland, daughters," said the queen, rising graciously from her throne.

"Stand up now, and tell me how you have fulfilled my commands."

"Your majesty commanded us to seek a chain far more beautiful and more enduring than the one which now lies before you. We have sought,—I upon earth, my sister in the air and on the water,—and link by link we have found it; or rather, link by link some parts of this chain have been disclosed to us,—parts which, small and faint though they be, are yet enough to tell of their identity with the great chain which wreathes the whole earth, and climbs the walls of the universe, surrounding and enclosing all created things, whose source is God, whose symbol is eternity."

"The banquet awaits your majesty's orders," said a page.

"Come, daughters," and taking one on each side of her, the queen marched through the open

door, followed by all the court. In the greenwood they found as magnificent a fairy's supper as ever was spread; and down the mountain and across

the fields, the little people were seen pouring in thick crowds, hastening to be present at the revels and welcome the wanderers home.

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